Adult Literacy Contact Centre NEWSLETTER

October 1990 Vol. 3, No. 9

A project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C.

1990
INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR

Margaret Mitchell Appointed Literacy Critic

Margaret Mitchell, the New Democratic Party MP for Vancouver East, has been appointed the party's new literacy critic, effective the beginning of this fall's parliamentary session.

Mitchell is currently gathering information on literacy issues and welcomes comments and suggestions from the B.C. literacy community, says Andrée Laparé, an Ottawa assistant to the MP on writing and political issues. "Our office is anxious to build up our existing list of contacts and would appreciate hearing from those involved in working to fight illiteracy in B.C.," she says.

All correspondence should be addressed to:

Margaret Mitchell, MP
Room 385 - Confederation Building
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

No postage is required.

1990/91 Cost-shared Projects

Nine B.C. literacy projects, cost-shared between the federal and provincial governments, were announced on September 8. Funding of the projects - totalling $434,890.00 - is shared equally between the two governments and is administered by community colleges. The announcements were made by federal Multiculturalism and Citizenship Minister Gerry Weiner and B.C. Minister of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, Bruce Strachan. The projects are:

Capilano College, North Vancouver

1. To test a software program designed to provide access to literacy instruction for adults with severe physical disabilities.

2. To prepare a literacy supplement for the Westcoast Reader newspaper about important literacy issues, to highlight International Literacy Year 1990 and give learners a voice through their published writing.

Douglas College, New Westminster

3. To hold a provincial conference (Literacy 2000) to explore innovative literacy programs and examine native, women's and mother tongue literacy issues; to extend current literacy networks and plan future literacy symposiums.

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Kwantlen College, Surrey

4. To collect information on adult-oriented science materials and make it available to literacy in structors.

Malaspina College, Nanaimo

5. To support a program to help inmates at the Nanaimo Regional Correction Centre develop learning skills in order to allow them to make the transition to pursuing further learning opportunities outside the Centre.

Malaspina College, Parksville

6. To provide a free, community-based reading and scribe service and information on the availability of tutoring services (The Write Place).

Selkirk College, Castlegar

7. To support adult literacy learners in planning, organizing and delivering learners' events throughout B.C.

Vancouver Community College

8. For the Adult Literacy Contact Centre to help adults in B.C. who are less than fully literate find appropriate learning opportunities.

9. For V.C.C. to develop a play that will present the issues of literacy from the learners' perspective.

Literacy Symbol Artwork Available

Canada Post's literacy symbol - a stylized drawing of a bird in flight composed of numerals, letters and symbols from several different alphabets - is available for use by literacy groups. The Corporation has produced sheets of black and white camera-ready art work (PMT's) of the design, which was commissioned to recognize International Literacy Year and issued as a commemorative postage stamp on World Literacy Day, September 8. The symbol was also reproduced as a limited edition of 500 lithographs to be donated to literacy organizations, or sold or auctioned off to raise funds for literacy.

The PMT sheets, with instructions, are available free of charge from the Contact Centre while supplies last.

Welcome: Proposals for 1991 Learner Events

Proposals for 1991 regional literacy learner events, funded by a Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology and National Literacy Secretariat cost-shared grant, will be accepted until December 15 this year, the Learner Event Advisory Committee has announced. The purpose of the events is to bring together learners to discuss issues and concerns relevant to their learning experience. Last year 23 events took place.

Proposals may be submitted by any government or non-government organization involved with literacy. Events may be planned by a local committee with a minimum of 50% learners on the committee. Decisions on proposals will be made by January 15, 1991 and the events must be held by June 15 next year. A one-page report from each will be published in the annual summary of learner events, Learners Talking to Learners.

The province-wide advisory committee (composed of learners and instructors) suggests that planning committees consider one-day, local or

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regional events. Some travel and childcare allowances will be available, and a small honorarium may be awarded to guest speakers.

Guidelines for submitting proposals and budgets, and further information, is available from Patty Bossort, Learner Event Advisory Committee, Box 117, Silverton, B.C., V0G 2B0, phone 358-2391.

ABE Journal Calls for Submissions

Groundwork, the journal of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C., is issuing a call to the field for submissions to its Spring 1991 issue, which will centre on the theme of Native Education. The issue will also contain the results of a membership survey published in the current issue (November, 1990) soliciting opinion from readers on the editorial direction the journal should take.

"The content of our Spring issue will be partly dependent upon the results of the membership survey," explains Yvonne Lord, Groundwork Coordinator/Editor. She adds that contributions of any length in the form of articles, reviews, editorial opinion or notices of upcoming events are welcome. The Spring issue will be published March 1. Send submissions to:

Yvonne A. Lord
Groundwork Coordinator/Editor
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
Box 399
Merritt, B.C. V0K 2B0
Phone: 378-6212 (home)

Literacy Volunteer Awards Deadline Extended

The nominations deadline for Canada's Literacy Volunteer Awards, administered by the Canadian Library Association and funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, was extended last month from September 30 to October 31. Under the program, volunteers and organizations who have made a significant contribution to Canadian literacy during International Literacy Year will be awarded Certificates of Appreciation in recognition ceremonies with local MP's in each federal riding. Nominations for the awards, intended also to develop awareness of local programs and facilities and encourage partnerships in the literacy community, were administered through participating local libraries.

Writing Past the Barriers at Writers Festival

Two B.C. writers who use English as a second language took part in the Vancouver International Writers Festival held in the city October 24-28. Japanese-born Yuko Seki and Vietnamese-born Hong Ngo joined Toronto writer Mario Pietrantoni in an October 25th panel discussion called "Writing Past the Barriers," featuring the voices of new writers who have overcome the challenge of learning to speak and write English. Ngo and Seki were both published in the Spring, 1990 issue of Voices, the magazine of new writing for new readers published by the Lower Mainland Society for Literacy and Employment.

Correctional Education in the Fraser Valley

A Langley, B.C. training college has taken over delivery of adult basic education programs in the seven corrections institutions in the Fraser Valley. The Langley College of Trade and Commerce began a three-year contract (through the Langley School District) on July 1. Corrections education had previously been administered by Fraser Valley College.

The comprehensive ABE program (literacy to Grade 10) serves approximately 200 inmates at seven institutions: Matsqui, Kent, Ferndale, Elbow Lake, Mission, Mountain, and the Regional Psychiatric Centre. Basic literacy is taught by a professional staff of 13 instructors and two program assistants, complemented by trained volunteer tutors.

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Adult Literacy Contact Centre Newsletter

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Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8
1-800-663-1293 Toll-free in B.C.
684-0624 Lower Mainland
684-8520 Facsimile

The Adult Literacy Contact Centre is a project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. and is jointly funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, and the National Literacy Secretariat.

The Centre welcomes receiving your literacy news by phone, fax or mail. We reserve the right to edit written submissions for the newsletter.

The newsletter is available free of charge to any individual or agency upon request.

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"The training is based on a learning centre approach," explains Frank Wise, Technical Manager of the Prison Education Program. He says the program has the specialized resources to meet the needs of Native inmates, ESL inmates, the learning or psychiatrically disabled, and the physically disabled. The program incorporates both individualized and group instruction as well as self-paced learning, depending on individual needs. The format accommodates weekly student intake, part-time and full-time participation, and differing levels of student ability. "We're constantly looking to revamp and improve the curriculum," adds Wise. "It's an ongoing process."

Literacy Video Available

"Illiteracy: the Challenge," the public awareness video by the Knowledge Network about adult illiteracy in Canada, is now available on loan, free of charge, to local cable community television channels in 3/4" broadcast format. The video is in three parts: "The Problem" (6 minutes, 15 seconds); "Causes and Attitudes" (6 minutes, 16 seconds); and "Search for Solutions" (6 minutes, 15 seconds). The programs reflect the needs of Canadians who are functionally illiterate, highlight the effects of illiteracy on society, and show examples of some available literacy programs.
Copies of the video are available from:

Megan Carvell, Manager
Career and Personal
Development Planning
The Knowledge Network
#300 - 475 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 4M9
Phone: 660-2000

B.C. Delegates at Public Policy Forum Literacy Conference

Representatives of B.C. labour, education and government attended a two-day conference in Quebec last month aimed at linking private sector initiatives on literacy with a national strategy. "The National Search Conference on Literacy" was held at Mont Ste. Marie, Quebec (one hour north of Ottawa) on October 11-12. The conference was sponsored by the Ottawa-based Public Policy Forum, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide an arena for the private sector (business, organized labour, the academic community) to meet with government decision makers to act upon issues of mutual interest.

The conference, the culmination of a series of literacy forums held by the PPF in cities across Canada, was attended by 35 representatives of government, business, labour and the literacy community. Attending from B.C. were Norma Kidd, Provincial Literacy Coordinator, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology; Patty Bossort, President, Adult Basic Education Association of B.C; Bert Hawrysh, President, Council of Forest Industries; Harry Baines, International Woodworkers of America, Local 1-217, I.W.A. Canada; and Wayne Kingston, of the Nanaimo learners' group A.L.L.O.W. (Adult Literacy Learners on the Way) who is currently on leave from MacMillan-Bloedel. (Kingston was the only learner present at the conference.)

The goals as outlined by the Forum were to: assess the need for a coordinated national literacy effort; set out a range of activities and possible structures; and define the roles and responsibilities of all participants in the national strategy.

Speakers at the Conference included:

* Michael Sullivan, Vice-President of Decima Research, on "Literacy in Canada: an Attitudinal Survey;"
* Bill Ardell, President and CEO of Coles Bookstores Ltd. and Chair, ABCanada, on "Turning Private Sector Commitment into Action;"
* Judy Koloski, Executive Director, The American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, Washington, D.C., on "The Private Sector and Literacy: the American Experience."

Bossort says the message delivered by business at the outset of the conference was clear: "Unless you can define literacy, we can't help." She says a working definition of literacy was necessary in order to get the private sector involved. "As long as there's disagreement among literacy providers, our position is undermined politically....we have to be able to explain to them what we're working on."

Forum participants agreed to define literacy as: "having the information processing skills necessary to use and understand printed materials encountered at work, at home and in the community." Bossort says she welcomes feedback on this wording; call her at 358-2391 (Silverton, B.C.).

The Adult Literacy Contact Centre provides information and encouragement by phone to adults who want to upgrade their skills through adult basic education. Our toll-free number for learners outside the Lower Mainland is:

1-800-663-1293

LITERACY B.C. UPDATE

PROJECT LITERACY
ABBOTSFORD-MATSQUI

Contact: Cynthia Andruske
Wendy Watson
Fraser Valley College
33844 King Road
Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 4N2
Phone: 853-7441

"The Literacy Players," PLAM's troupe of learners from the Fraser Valley College Adult Basic Education program, performed "Marks on Paper," John Lazarus' play on becoming literate, at the opening of the Literacy 2000 Conference at the Douglas College Performing Arts Theatre on October 19. Two new cast members were added for the occasion - Connoly Whitworth and Burk Collins; the others were Lisa Clark, Marg Short and Chris Grimson. The performance was part of an ongoing campaign to raise funds for PLAM projects.

COMOX VALLEY LITERACY
PROJECT GROUP

Contact: David Driedger
Vancouver Island Regional Library
Courtenay Branch
410 Cliffe Avenue,
Courtenay, B.C. V9N 2J2
Phone: 334-3369 or:
Maggie Richardson
ABE Coordinator
North Island College
156 Manor Drive
Comox, B.C. V9N 6P7
Phone: 339-8910

Literacy B.C. Executive Director Linda Mitchell was guest speaker at the group's October 24 meeting at North Island College, reports Maggie Richardson. The visit, which also included radio and press interviews, was intended to raise public awareness about Literacy B.C. and examine the Comox Valley group's goals and direction. "In an effort to expand involvement in the community, some of our learners have been attending meetings with a local amateur writers' group and may collaborate with it on a display of student writing during National Book Week next April," Richardson adds.

FORT ST. JOHN LITERACY
SOCIETY

Contact: Romi Haseo
Fort St. John Public Library
10349 - 100th Street
Fort St. John, B.C. V1J 3Z2
Phone: 785-3731

Interested volunteers are available to take part in a tutor training program once funding sources are in place, reports Romi Haseo. The group met October 29 to hear from delegates to the Literacy 2000 Conference and meets again November 26 at 7:30 p.m. at the Library.

FRASER VALLEY EAST
LITERACY ASSOCIATION

Contact: Gail Newby
45405 Stevenson Road
Sardis, B.C. V2R 1M2
Phone: 858-4913

Literacy B.C. Executive Director Linda Mitchell addressed the October 10 meeting of the group, reports Gail Newby. Guest speaker at the November 13 meeting will be Grace Piontkovsky, Executive Director of ALDA, (Association for Learning Disabled Adults), who will discuss learning problems in general and present simulation exercises showing how it feels to be learning disabled. The meeting, co-sponsored with the Fraser Valley Regional Library, will be held at 7:00 p.m. at the Library in Chilliwack.

PROJECT LITERACY
GREATER VANCOUVER

Contact: Hendrik Hoekema
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6
Phone: 291-3298

Nominations to the 1990/91 executive were accepted at the October 26 meeting. PLGV seeks additional nominations for the elections to be held at the next meeting, 9 a.m. Nov. 23, 5th Floor Boardroom, Vancouver Community College, 1155 E. Broadway. Contact Hendrick Hoekema at 291-3298.

PROJECT LITERACY HOUSTON

Contact: Sandi Lavallie
c/o Northwest Community College
P.O. Box 1277
Houston, B.C. V0J 1Z0
Phone: 845-7266

LITERACY B.C. UPDATE

PROJECT LITERACY KELOWNA

Contact: Maxine Veach
(Coordinator)
Betty Knox (President)
P.O. Box 1886, Station A
Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 8P2
Phone: 762-2163

Three representatives of PL Kelowna - Maxine Veach, Betty Knox, and volunteer tutor Yvette Adam - attended the October 4 NewsAble workshop at the Travelodge Inn in Kamloops. "We were just delighted with it," reports Maxine Veach. "We felt it was an extremely well put together event, with just the right mix of participants." PL Kelowna holds its annual general meeting on November 8 at 7:30 p.m. in the Lodge Motor Inn, Kelowna.

LITERACY KITIMAT

Contact: Janette Camazzola
c/o Kitimat Community Services Society
#201 - 370 City Centre
Kitimat, B.C. V8C 1T6
Phone: 632-3139

Representatives of Literacy Kitimat met with Advanced Education, Training and Technology Minister Bruce Strachan, Premier William VanderZalm and 15 other cabinet members during a government visit to Kitimat on September 26. The purpose of the meeting was to present the Minister with a brief outlining the need for funding of a literacy program in Kitimat. The brief was presented by volunteer coordinator Janette Camazzola; Jim Aston, representing volunteer tutor instructors; volunteer tutors Muriel Greenlaw, Fred Rodrigo, and Eileen Rowlett; two students; and Joan Ling, chairperson of the School Board, School District #80, Kitimat.

"The response of the Minister was very favourable," reports Janette Camazzola. "We are definitely being considered for funding this spring." She says the Minister "was especially interested" in hearing from the two students present. Six volunteers have recently completed tutor training, and the group continues to promote its reader-friendly logo to local businesses. Literacy Kitimat usually meets the first Monday of every month; next month's meeting will be held on November 6.

LITERACY NANAIMO

Contact: Carolyn McWhinnie
#314 - 350 Terminal Avenue
Nanaimo, B.C. V9S 4J7
Phone: 754-1704

PROJECT LITERACY PARKSVILLE/QUALICUM

Contact: Linda Perkins
The Write Place
192A Morison Avenue
Parksville, B.C. V0R 2S0
(Mailing address: General Delivery
Parksville, B.C. V0R 2S0)
Phone: 248-4041 or 248-4042

Demand for the provision of scribe services - assistance with tasks such as letter-writing, resumes, and filling out forms - remains steady, reports Pat LaPalme of The Write Place. "Fulfilling client requests often requires some creative problem solving on the part of our staff," she adds. The effort to interest local employers in workplace literacy programs is underway: the first pilot project has been introduced at the A & W restaurant in Parksville, where Manager Marcel Goudreault has agreed to have tutors meet with his employees for tutoring sessions on the worksite. Employees participating in the program are paid half their regular hourly wage during the sessions.

45 applicants applied for positions in the tutor training program which began October 27 at Malaspina College; 22 have been accepted. The course teaches volunteer tutors how to help adults learn reading, writing and basic math skills, with reference to the whole language approach, ESL, and learning disabilities. Pat LaPalme says The Write Place has recorded an increased demand for tutors since September.

PROJECT LITERACY PRINCE GEORGE

Contact: Murry Krause
Coordinator, United Way
Box 494,
Prince George, B.C. V2L 4S6
Phone: 561-1040 Fax: 562-8102

LITERACY B.C. UPDATE

PROJECT LITERACY PRINCE RUPERT

Contact: Sheila Lid
1920 Atlin Avenue
Prince Rupert, B.C. V8J 1E8
Phone: 624-6698 or 627-7178

LITERACY SMITHERS

Contact: Levica Markides
Smithers Community Services Association
Box 2684, Smithers, B.C V0J 2N0
Phone: 847-9553

PROJECT LITERACY SUNSHINE COAST

Contact: Mary Pinnigar
c/o Continuing Education, SD #46
P.O. Box 888
Sechelt, B.C. V0N 3A0
Phone: 885-2991

The "P.E.P." (Part-time Education Program) for adults, offering both the regular and adult Dogwood certificate, is underway using a portable classroom at Elphinstone Secondary School in Gibsons, reports Mary Pinnigar. Drop-in hours are flexible (afternoon and evening); for more information contact Vern or John at 886-9780. A performance of the literacy play, "Marks on Paper," and a panel of four student speakers highlighted the learners' event held September 27 at Rockwood Lodge in Sechelt.

PROJECT LITERACY SURREY/DELTA

Contact: Bev Yaworsky
Surrey Public Library (591-4312) or:
Ene Haabnit
Newton Public Library (596-7401)

Guest speaker at the October 24 meeting was Mike Johnson, president of "Friends of Invergarry," whose topic was the history, purpose and activities of the group. The next meeting is scheduled for 3:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 21 at the Surrey Public Library (Whalley), when PL Surrey/Delta will select its new chairperson.

PROJECT LITERACY TERRACE

Contact: Jake Muller
Northwest Community College
P.O. Box 726
Terrace, B.C. V8G 4C2
Phone: 635-6511, local 255
Fax: 635-3511

PROJECT LITERACY VICTORIA

Contact: Donna Oswald-Miller
c/o Sooke School District
Continuing Education
3143 Jacklin Road
Victoria, B.C. V9B 5R1
Phone: 478-5800
Contact: The Learners' Network
760-A Hillside Avenue
Victoria, B.C. V8T 1Z4
Phone: 381-3755

Donna Lambert and Susan Kurushima from the Learners' Network, and two volunteer tutors - Charles Vanderwilt and Esther Wood - participated on behalf of PL Victoria in last month's NewsAble workshop in Nanaimo. "The tutors, especially, found [the workshop] a really practical activity," reports Susan Kurushima. "It gave them specific skills they could take home and use." Tutor Vanderwilt plans to follow up by giving his own workshop, modelled on NewsAble, to PL Victoria's current group of 35 tutors. 25 additional tutors are presently being trained.

The adult learning program in the Sooke School District plans a workshop for learners with Statistics Canada employees on completing the 1991 Census forms. No date has yet been set. The PL Board of Directors recently held a workshop with a facilitator from the United Way designed to help the new board develop its strategic planning.

More than $24,000 was raised for the Learners' Network by September's Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournament.

PROJECT LITERACY WEST KOOTENAYS

Contact: Judy Wearmouth
Castlegar Public Library
1005 - 3rd Street
Castlegar, B.C. V1N 2A2
Phone: 365-7765

17 librarians from the West Kootenay Library Association met at the Castlegar Public Library on October 10 to take part in the staff training

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LITERACY B.C. UPDATE

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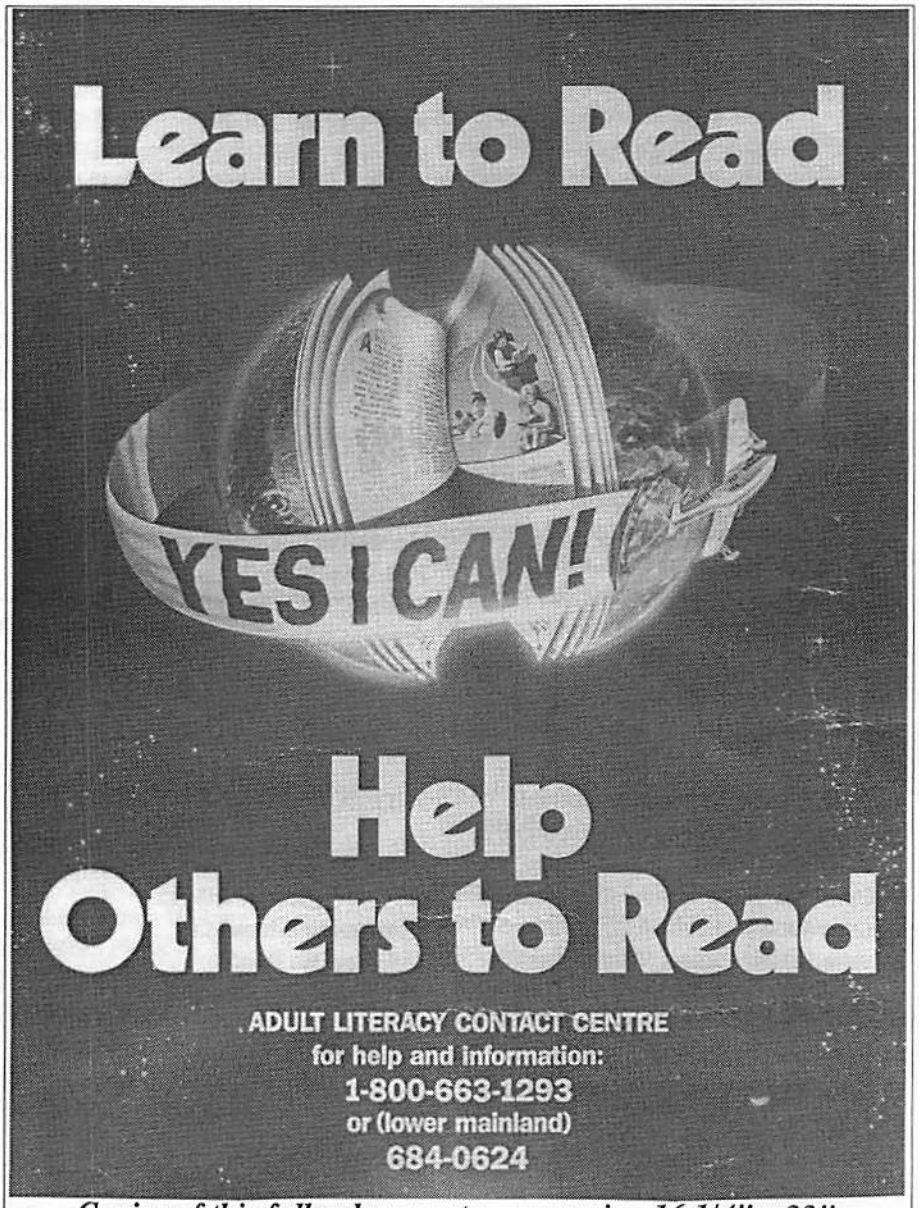
component of the B.C. Library Association's "Library-Literacy Link" project. (The components of the project include a core adult literacy collection, staff training workshops and materials, and a package of promotional materials.) Workshops are currently being held throughout the province to familiarize library staff with literacy issues and the options for library services to adult learners.

Wearmouth reports the workshop, conducted by Ene Haabniit of the Surrey Public Library, was a productive experience and library staff were "alerted to some situations we weren't aware of before." The West Kootenay Library Association has received its core literacy collection as part of the project, and the acquisitions have elicited "quite a bit of interest," she adds. "We have a list of interested volunteer tutors, and groups have met in Castlegar, Trail and Nelson. We are now awaiting confirmation of our cost-shared grant in order to set up tutor training programs in these branches." Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer may contact Sue Port at 365-6056.

PROJECT LITERACY WILLIAMS LAKE

Contact: Debby DeMare
P.O. Box 4596
Williams Lake, B.C. V2G 2V6
Phone: 398-8400

The group held a tutor training workshop with Literacy B.C. board member-at-large Mary Alice Johnson on Saturday, October 27 at Cariboo College. 23 volunteers attended the four hour workshop on the last day of the current training session. Similar workshops have been held with local basic literacy classroom instructor Sylvia Doherty, and Anne Walsh, an experienced tutor, basic literacy instructor and local author. "We wanted to get some outside input, a variety of experience and different points of view," explains Debby DeMare. Literacy B.C. Executive Director Linda Mitchell speaks to the group at a meeting in early November.



Copies of this full-colour poster measuring 16 1/4" x 22" are available free of charge from the Contact Centre.